



Two months; Two years; Two Decades:

## The Future & How to Plan for it

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Looking Up Feeling Good Pty Ltd

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# ETR

Specialist in Advanced Organisational Strategy, using Values and Futures frameworks

Small private firms to large corporate and Government entities across numerous sectors:

DEST; Centrelink; Dept Defence; Gold Coast Water; CPA Australia; Pacific Brands;  
Deakin University; Fosters; Trimas Corporation; ESPN; City Greater Dandenong...

Founder of the Australian Strategic Planning Institute; Advisory board member of the  
Australian Bill of Rights Initiative; professional life member World Future Society; Fellow  
of Australian Sales and Marketing Institute

Numerous presentations and training nationally and internationally on Innovation,  
Organisational Change, Futures and Sustainability

Articles and papers published in Journals and magazines around the world

Author of 'The Money Tree & How to Grow One – Creating Success in Your Business' and  
the soon to be finished '*Killing Trends: The Graceful Art of Innovation*'

MSc Strategic Foresight; G.Cert Teaching & Learning; M.Prac NLP; Multi Certification in the  
Spiral Dynamics framework

**Pragmatist – helping organisations see the road ahead more clearly such that they can make  
better decisions and take more effective action today**



**“The pessimist sees difficulty  
in every opportunity; the  
optimist sees opportunity in  
every difficulty”**

Winston Churchill



# Neither Pessimist nor Optimist

*A Pragmatist* - EVERY idea must be supported  
by a good reason for action

*A Realist* – too many decisions are made  
without the right questions being asked



# What a Strategic Futurist Does

- Provokes the existing thinking paradigms
- Plays 'Court Jester' role – test A & E
- Help organisations identify emerging issues **before** they become 'current problems'
- Give senior managers the time to make more effective operational decisions



# Intentions

- Breadth – remove blinkers
- Depth – peel layers to get to substance
- Distance – look further ahead



# What I do

- Research Emerging Issues (80%)
- Implications Analysis for Clients (15%)
  - What might bite us on the backside?
  - What might be diamonds worth grabbing?
- Generate pragmatic decision criteria (5%)



# What I don't do

Predict the exact future (*no one here can afford the costs involved in prediction*)



# How to Prepare for your Future

The key 'Key':

You have to actually think about it!



# How to Prepare for your Future

Key:

You are aiming to overcome:

Strategic Myopia

Strategic Scotomas



# Current Trends

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# Sleepwalking into the Future

“Teenagers and Senior Managers have one thing in common – they’re both too smart to be told anything”

(Also referred to as ‘*the arrogance of ignorance*’ or *the ‘bias of beliefs’ hurdle*)



# Sleepwalking Caused by...

- Failing to pay attention to emerging signals
- Failing to question your assumptions (v)
- Failing to assess your expectations (r)
- Suffering Strategic Myopia & Scotomas



# Antidote

- Ask: 'Are our assumptions valid?'
  - How do we know?
- Ask: 'Are our expectations realistic?'
  - How are we judging them?
- Ask: 'What additional information is out there'
  - confirming, disconfirming, alternative?
- Ask: 'What are we failing to see?'
  - Where else can we look?



# Strategic Myopia & Scotomas



# Adapting to Change

Strategic Myopia (short sightedness)

Strategic Scotomas (blind-spots)

- Advanced Organisational Alertness
- Invest in emerging needs, not just old ones



What are the main sources of information upon which you rely?



Aaaand....

How do you know they are the right ones to  
rely on?



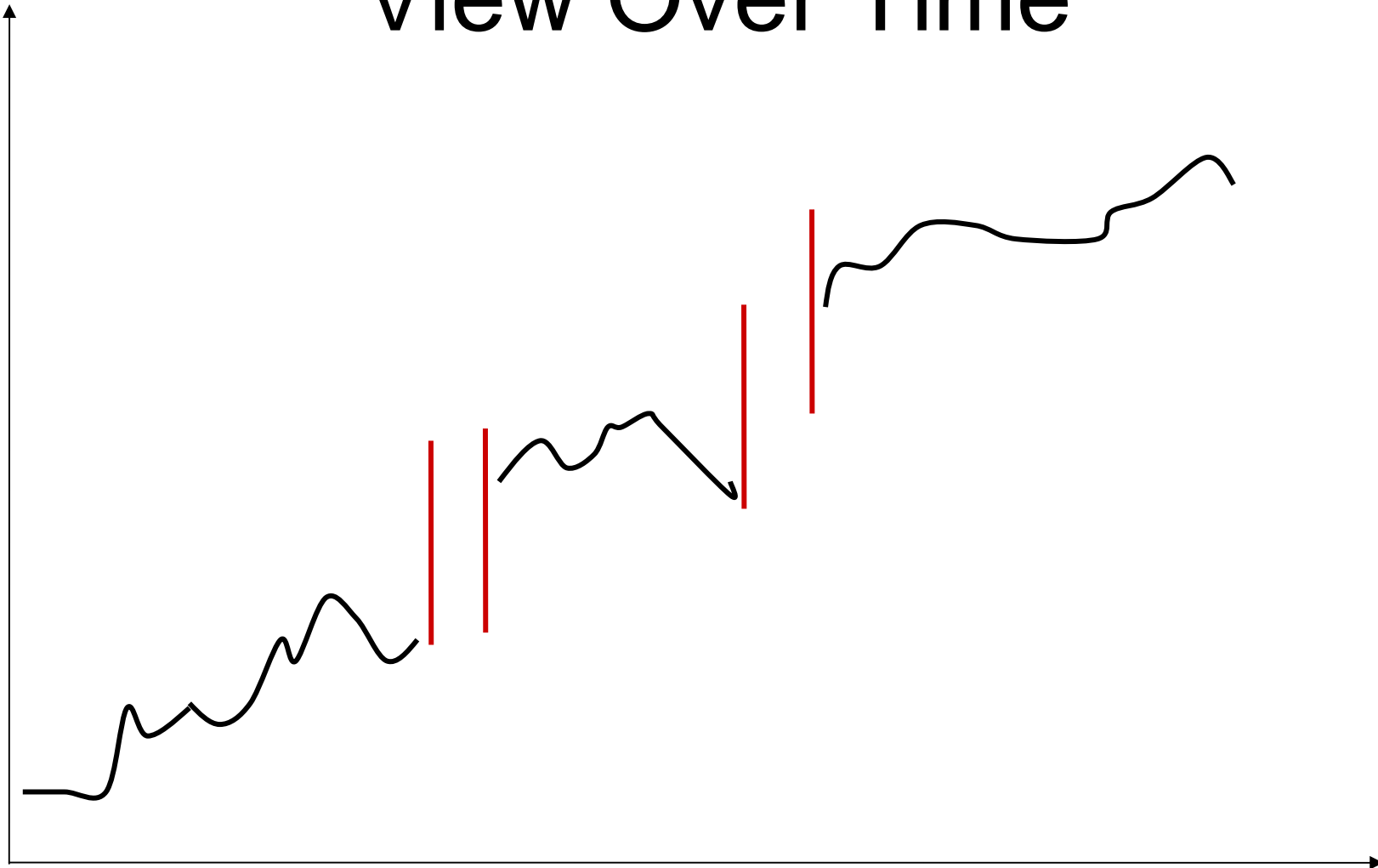
Your Top 3 Issues Right now  
are...?



“Trend Reliance - Is the art of praying that history repeats itself”



# View Over Time





# History Disrupted:

The first 'Jumbo Jet'

OnLine Search & Select

Refrigeration

GM Foods



# A Future Emerging?

Life versus Lifestyle

Soft Steps (travel footprint)

Crowd sourcing as new paradigm



# A Future Emerging?

‘Enough-ness’

Telephony firms waking from their stupor

The rise of uber luxury



# Death throes or Old Age?

Agents as commodity shops

Picture perfect postcards

Demographic targeted positioning

‘Not here’ (or ‘only over there’)

Business Travel of *almost* any kind



# Knock, knock, knock

Auction site styled holidays

Contribution themed opportunities

Crowd-sourced collectives (NOT 'group' bookings)

'Pure Food' is the new 'Black'

Emergence of 'luxury' road travel



# In your shoes

Next Two months: I'd realign how and what I market (tap into emerging themes)

Next Two years: I'd been leading in the emerging customer offerings space (being known as '')

Next Two Decades: Most of right now will be long forgotten (I'd be having another 'makeover')



# In your shoes...

I'd encourage all staff to begin noticing clues  
(need to give them permission)

Pay attention to an increase in small group  
offerings (3-8)

Stop selling 'postcards' - sell the 3 E's:  
engagement, embedded-ness and  
emersion



# In your shoes...

Shift to a 'connection brokering' model

Pay attention to the emerging focus on 'us'

Align targeting to Values levels and away from the outdated and fundamentally flawed demographics model



# Surprises That Could Impact?

- Enoughness
- Crowd Sourcing – holidays, product, services
- Carbon Miles
- Localisation & Regionalisation
- City Based (Vertical) Farming



# Surprises That Could Impact?

- Energy Availability
- Access to Water for Production
- Skilled Employees
- The End of Landfill



# What could hurt

- Rapid Prototyping (micro-manufacturing)
- Fuel & staff costs; Carbon Footprints
- Regionalised shopping / sourcing
- 'Enough-ness'



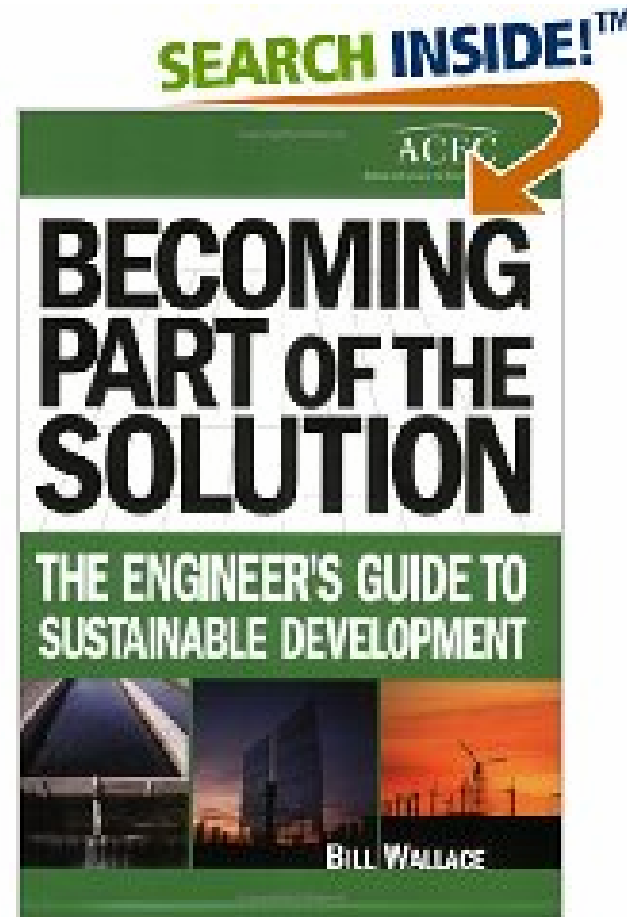
# What could help

- Take Back Legislation
- By-passing parasites
- Cost of fuel
- Whole of enterprise risk management
- Symbiotic Supply chains & Biomimicry



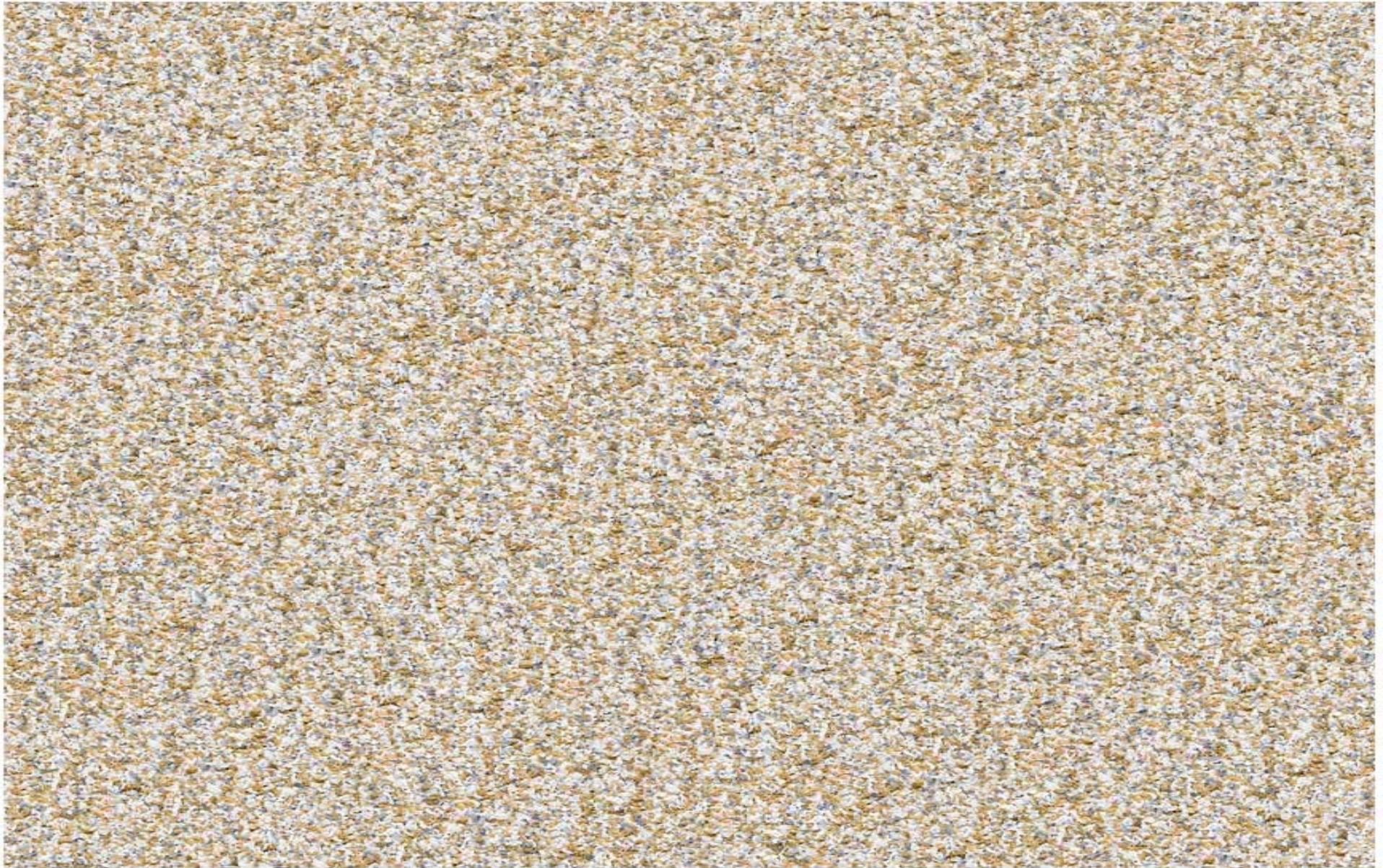
# Take Back Legislation

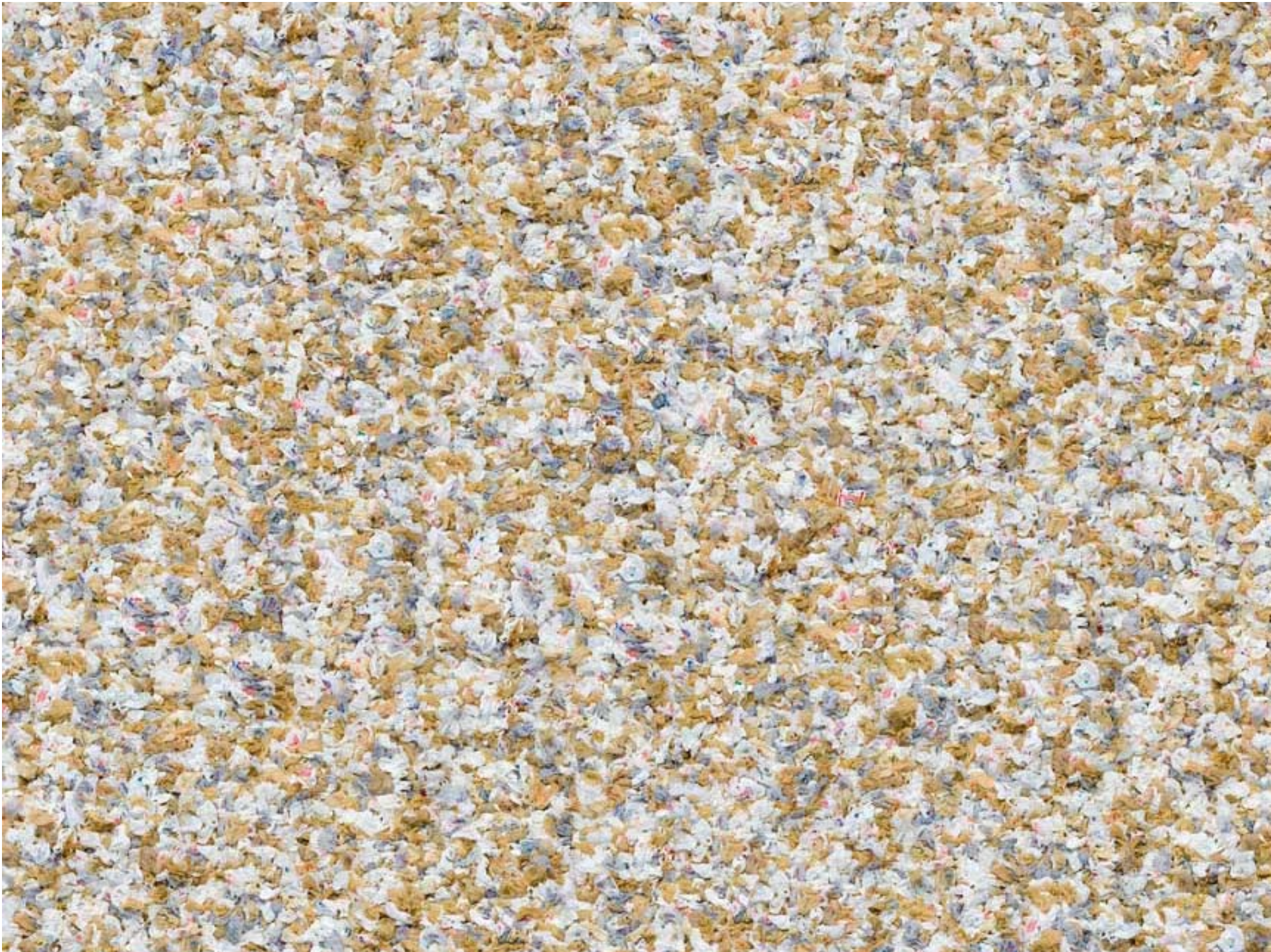
- **Germany, Japan, US**  
– computers
- Now beyond  
computing –  
mattresses, cars...
- Companies voluntarily  
engaging
  
- Next?





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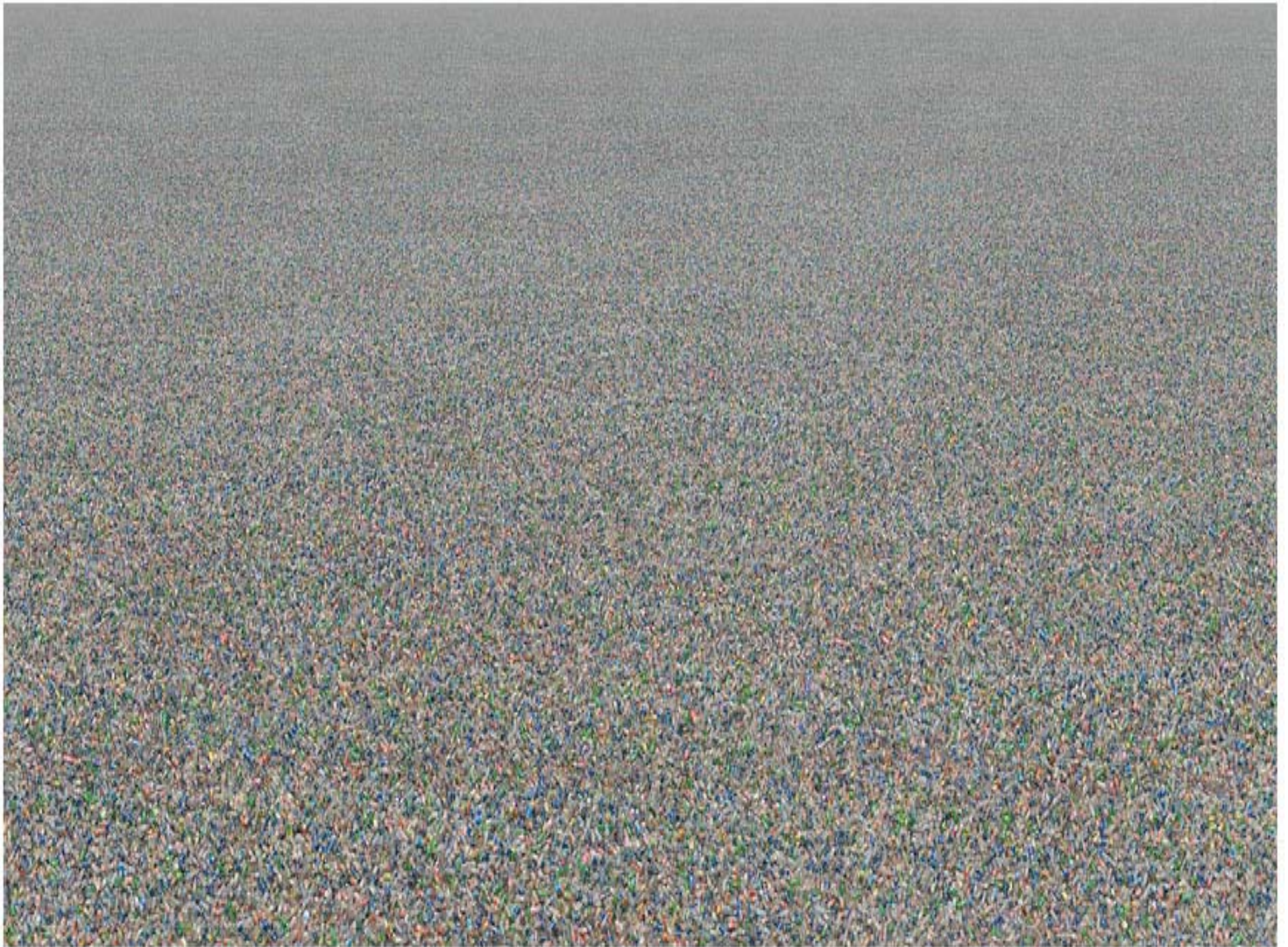






60 thousand plastic bags used in  
the US every 5 seconds





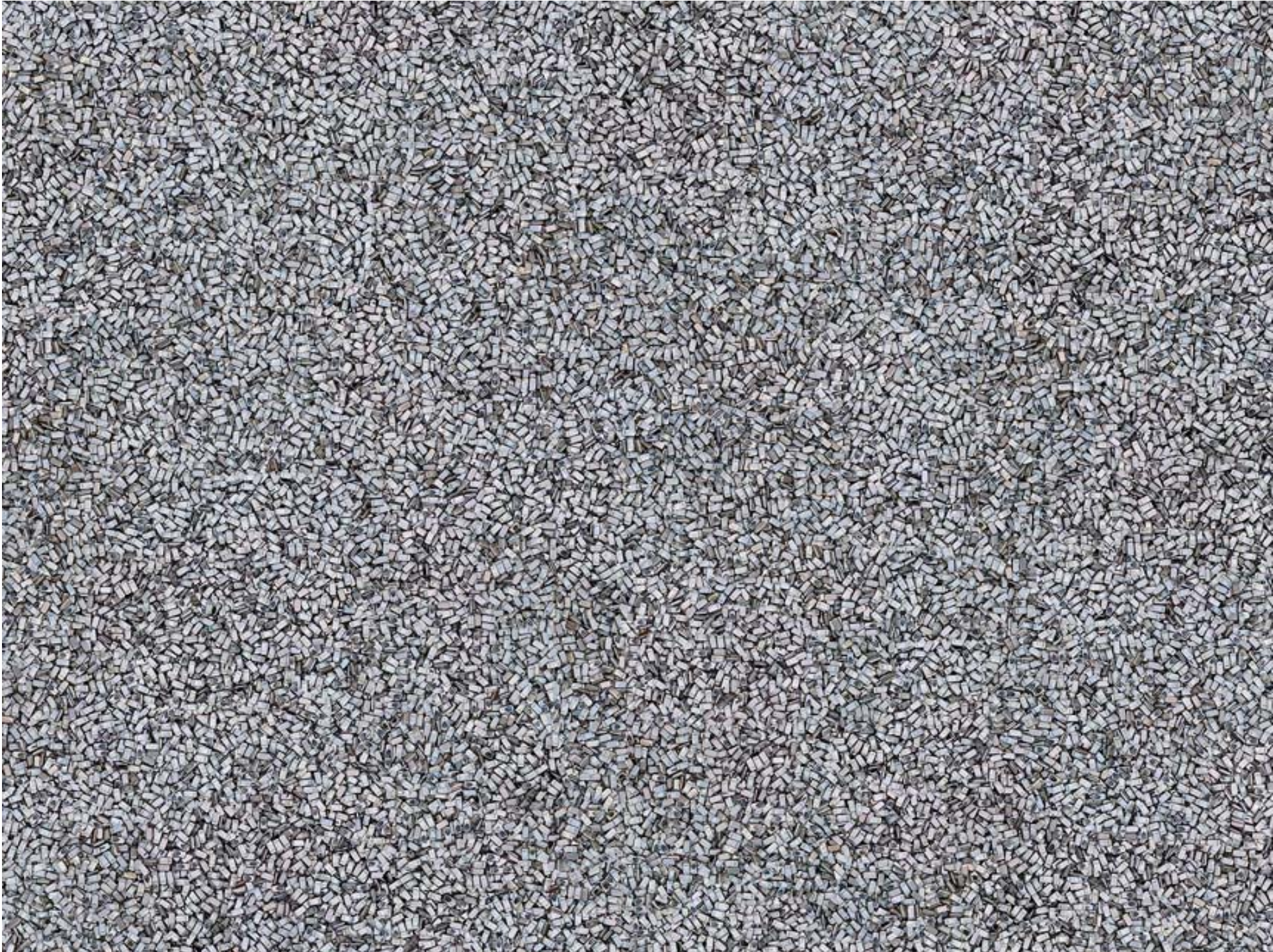




# Two Million plastic drink bottles used in the US EVERY 5 Minutes









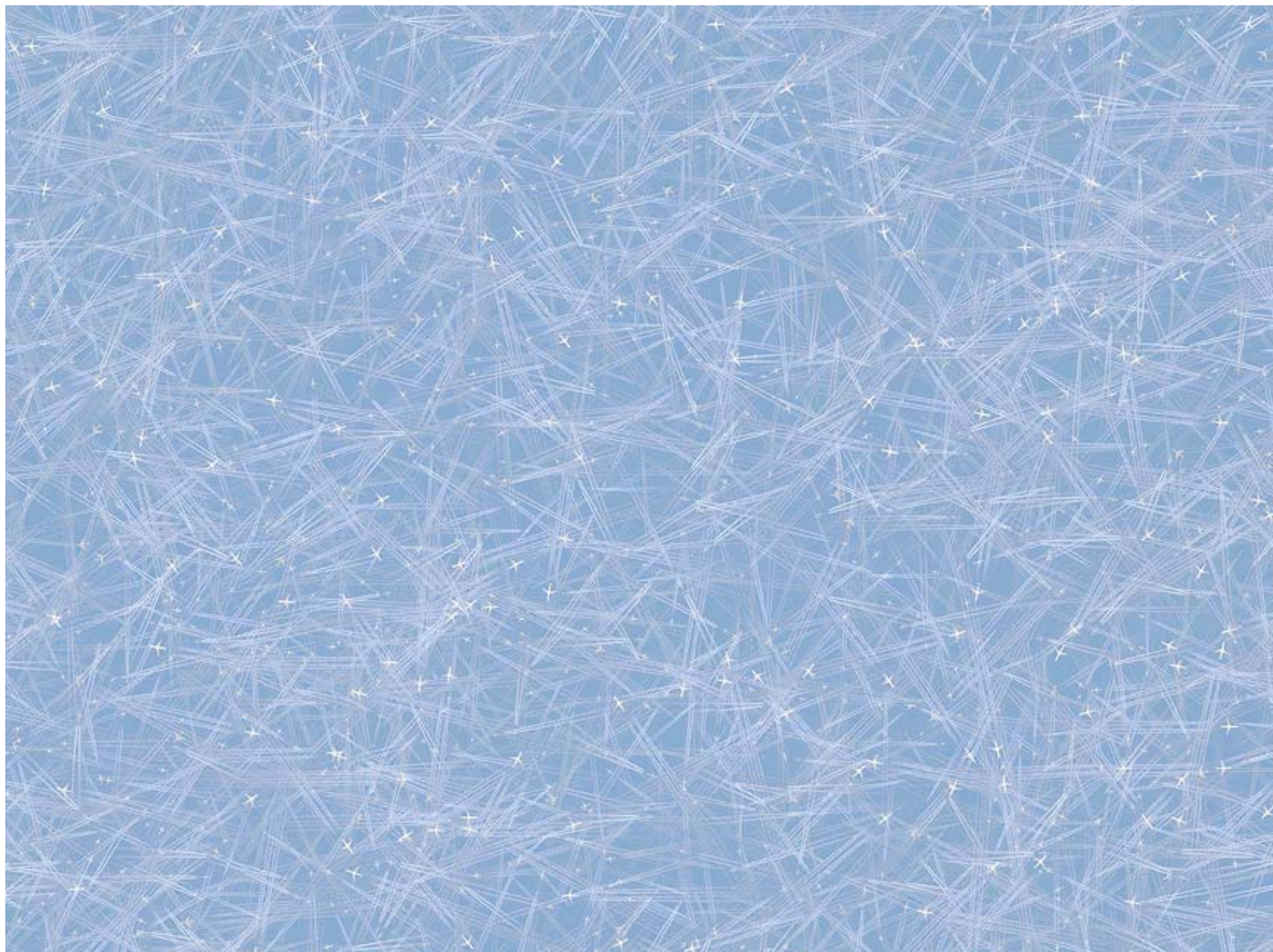
426,000 cell phones retired in the  
US every day

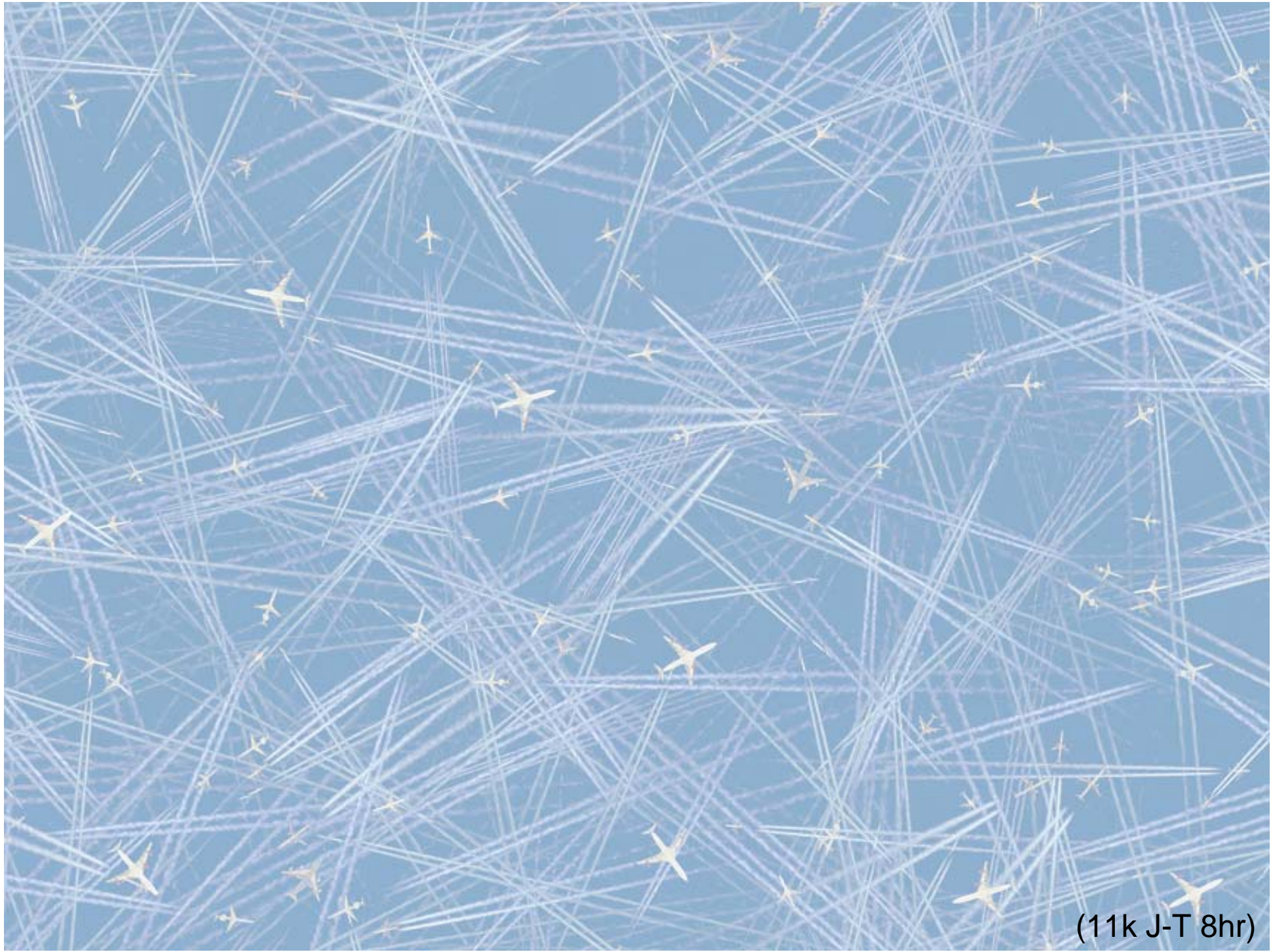




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(11k J-T 8hr)



# Innovate or Increment?

Innovation is deliberate change for the future

If you don't shape your own future, someone will shape it for you

Innovation is a mindset of 'positive existence'

Most organisations do 'adequate survival'  
until they are innovated out of existence!



# Myth Busted 4

Innovation is hard



# Myth Busted 3

You can only innovate products



# Myth Busted 2

Creativity & Innovation are 'one in the same'



# Myth Busted 1

Trends are accurate indicators of the future



# Barriers to Innovation

- Your Organisation's Attitude
- Not Knowing where to start
- Not Knowing How to start
- Not knowing WHAT you do



# Environmental Scanning

Improve inputs by expanding the sources  
and increasing the awareness of  
available information



# Environmental Scanning

- Not what to do but **what to consider**
- Provides inputs **BEFORE** the ideas for intention and implementation are constructed
- 'Buys' time for management decisions



# Environmental Scanning

- 'Weak Signals of Change'
- Often 10 years + in potential impact
- Early signs of a change in operating environment
- Advanced warning signals
- Might be nothing, might be something
- On periphery of field & 'unrelated'



# Scanning Frameworks

Most common is the 'STEEP' framework

- **S**ocial
- **T**echnological
- **E**conomic
- **E**nvironmental
- **P**olitical



# Improved Scanning Framework

‘Very STEEP’

- Values
- Social
- Technological
- Economic
- Environmental
- Political



# Development of Legislation

- Stage 3 = Legislation forcing compliance enacted
- Stage 2 = Communities of Practise, Interest Groups more vocal & influential, green paper released, increasing media coverage
- Stage 1 = 'One-Off' protests / Minimal or one-off media news items



# Environmental Damage

- Stage 3 = Land Degradation/Salt pans
- Stage 2 = Decrease in flora /fauna;  
diminishing crop returns
- Stage 1 = Drop in self fertilisation;  
shortened or lack of flowering



# An Organisation in Trouble

- Stage 3 = Cost blow outs / public awareness of poor investment decisions
- Stage 2 = Staff turnover in critical areas; delays in payments of debts; increase in administration or delayed process flows; 'profit warning' / denial of issues before public is aware of the issue
- Stage 1 = Increase in customer complaints (business processes in action)



# Overcoming Bias

- Who might have a different opinion?
- In what way might their opinion differ?
- What value can we gain by including a different opinion?
- What unquestioned assumptions might be present in my thinking?
- Utilise Causal Layered Analysis to 'unpack' the depth and quality of discourse



# Surfacing Assumptions

3 questions to ask (and keep asking):

Who wins?

Who loses?

Who is doing the 'saying'?



# Summary

Every organisational manager or owner has the right to be pessimistic or optimistic about their future



# Summary

None of them have the right to NOT BE  
pragmatic & realistic



# Summary

Unquestioned Assumptions = Trend Reliance  
= greater risk exposure

Unrealistic expectations = Strategic  
Scotomas (blindspots) = ignoring signals of  
change



# Summary

You need to give yourself permission to look further ahead, to question what you see, to consider alternative perspectives

You need to find a way to encourage the Court Jester to inform your strategic thinking and planning



# Summary

The are so many opportunities available that the real problem will be selecting the most suitable ones

Consider 'Engagement'; 'Embedded-ness' and 'Emersion' as guides



# Questions?

Additional slides follow...



# Thought starters...

## The Global Currency Unit

= 1 Litre of fresh water

All trade exchanges rely on the availability of water

Ask – “How many ‘Globals’ are used to make product ‘X’?”



# TS One:

Coffee – 10,000 Globals to grow about half a kilo (let's not talk about drinking it)

Beer – 10 Globals for every 1 litre of beer (let's not talk about transport or bottling)

Your car, your clothes, your lifestyle, your diet – how many Globals do you spend each day? And how many do you harvest?



# Idea Three

- The Theory of Sustainable Societies  
(and the paradox)



# Theory of Sustainable Societies

*Advanced societies seek and encourage ways for members of their society to improve the conditions for their current and future existence. Societies that attempt to maintain the status quo ultimately decay*



# Sustainable Societies Paradox

*The degree to which a society can be considered 'truly advanced' is in direct INVERSE proportion to the size of their ecological footprint*



# The Paradox:

- Wasteful societies are **not** 'advanced'
- Societies with poor living conditions are **not** 'advanced'
- Big footprints = less advanced
- Poor living conditions = less advanced